

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The Dragon Makes War against the Woman and the Rest of Her Offspring (Part 2: Revelation 13.10-18)



1. Review of Revelation 13.1-10 (The Beast from the Sea)

12:17 Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

13.1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. ² And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. ³ One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marvelled as they followed the beast. ⁴ And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

⁵ And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to

conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,⁸ and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

¹⁰ If anyone is to be taken captive,
to captivity he goes;
if anyone is to be slain with the sword,
with the sword must he be slain.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

- a. The description of the first beast: “out of the sea” (cf. Dan 7.1-7; Rev 4.6; 21.1; Is 17.12; Rev 17.15); “ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems” (cf. dragon in 12.3); “blasphemous names” (reveal true character; cf. 13.6) – false claims to sovereignty against God
 - i. Beastly Kingdoms (leopard, bear, lion – Daniel 7, esp. vv.1-7)
- b. Imitation and masquerading (cf. description of Christ [chs.5, 19] and the description of the beast [ch. 13])
 - i. Counterfeit Trinity (dragon, beast from the sea, and beast from the earth [false prophet])
 - ii. Counterfeit church (cf. harlot of Babylon in Rev 17)
 - iii. the “mortal wound” (*plēgē* – “plague” of death: cf. 13.12, 14; other occurrences of “plague” refer to divine judgment: 9.18, 20; 11.6; 15.1, 6, 8; 16.9, 21 [twice]; 18.4, 8; 21.9; 22.18); wounded by the sword (Rev 13.14; cf. Is 27.1)
- c. The Beast makes war on the saints (13.6-8)
 - i. God’s sovereignty and the divine passive: “it was given,” “it was allowed,” etc. (cf. Rev 13.5a, 5b, 7a, 7b, 14, 15)
 - ii. “it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them” (cf. Rev 6.9-11; 11.7-12; 19.11-21)
 - iii. “And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.” (Rev 13.7-8; cf. Rev 7.1-17; 17.8; 20.12, 15; 21.27)
- d. Call for spiritual discernment (Rev 13.9-10)
 - i. “If anyone has an ear, let him hear: ¹⁰ If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.” (13.9-10)
 - ii. The voice of the Spirit, a call to endurance and faith (cf. 2.7, 11, 17, 29; 3.6, 13, 22 – *Rev 13.1-8 applies to present situation of the seven churches*)

2. Revelation 13.11-18 (The Second Beast from the Land)

¹¹Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. ¹²It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. ¹³It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, ¹⁴and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. ¹⁶Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, ¹⁷so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. ¹⁸This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

3. The Beast from the Earth (13.11-18)

a. Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. (13.11)

- i. description of the second beast (a.k.a. “false prophet” in 16.3; 19.20; 20.10): “from the earth” (cf. James 3.13-18); “two horns like a lamb” (masquerade); “spoke like a dragon”

James 3:13-18 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵ This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (cf. 2 Cor 2.12-14 below)

b. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. ¹³It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, ¹⁴and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. (13.12-15)

- i. The second beast leads people to worship the first beast, just as the Spirit leads us to worship Christ.

John 16:13-15 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

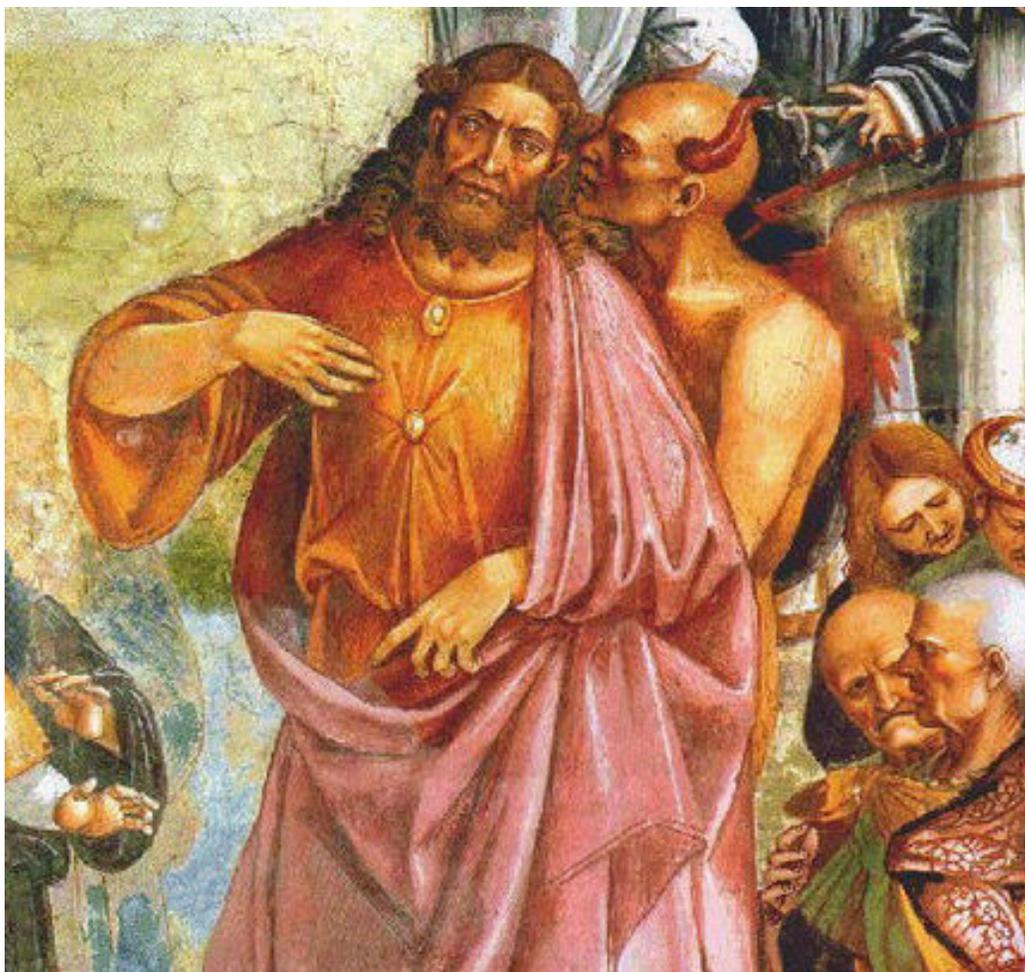
ii. “performs great signs” (false prophet imitates Elijah [1 Kings 18.20-40]; cf. Rev 11.5 and Ex 7.11)

2 Corinthians 11:13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Matthew 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.” (cf. Rev 2.18-29)

iii. “cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain” (cf. Dan 3)

iv. Counterfeit religion: how is the second beast deceiving the world and the church today? (cf. Barmen Declaration, 1934)



Luca Signorelli, detail from *Sermons and Deeds of the Antichrist*

- c. **Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead,¹⁷ so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.¹⁸ This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666. (13.16-18)**

- i. “the mark” of the beast (cf. Rev 14.9, 11; 16.2; 19.20; 20.4) vs. “the seal” of God (Rev 7.2-3; 9.4; 14.1; 22.4; cf. Ezek 9.4)

Colossians 1:13-14 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience –³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Acts 26:16-18 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you,¹⁷ delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles-- to whom I am sending you¹⁸ to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Revelation 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

Revelation 14:9-11 And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”

- d. **This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666. (13.18)**

- i. “calculate the number”: gematria?
- before Arabic numbers, letters were used as numerals (e.g., $\alpha = 1$, $\beta = 2$, $\gamma = 3$, etc.; also, Super Bowl XLVIII)
 - IHΞΟΥΣ (Jesus) = 888 (I = 10, H = 8, Ξ = 200, Ο = 70, Υ = 400, Σ = 200) (cf. Resurrection Sunday is the eighth day of the week, the first day of the New Creation [cf. allusions to Genesis 1-2 in John 20])

- Hundreds of names have been calculated as 666 (20th-century examples include: Hitler, Henry Kissinger, Anwar Sadat, Ronald Wilson Reagan, Mikhail S. Gorbachev)
 - G. Salmon's rules for calculating 666: "First, if the proper name by itself will not yield it, add a title; secondly, if the sum cannot be found in Greek, try Hebrew, or even Latin; thirdly, do not be too particular about the spelling ... We cannot infer much from the fact that a key fits the lock if it is a lock in which almost any key will turn." (*An Historical Introduction to the Study of the New Testament* [London, 1904], 230-231)
- ii. "the number of the beast ... is the number of man"
- iii. 666 = complete imperfection (6 is penultimate, 7 is ultimate; Revelation narrates a series of 7s; 666 signifies blasphemous, self-deifying humanity which claims ultimate perfection; such humanity is idolatrous and, therefore, beastly – 666, the number of man, is the number of the beast)
- iv. thrice repeated 6: intensification/masquerade (cf. "holy, holy, holy"; "him who was and who is and who is to come" [Rev 1.4, 8; 4.8]; re: the Beast "who was and who is not and who is to come" [Rev 17.8])
- v. "wisdom (*sophia*) and understanding (*nous*)": spiritual discernment

Revelation 17:9 This calls for a mind (*nous*) with wisdom (*sophia*): the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated.

1 Corinthians 2.12-14: Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

1 John 2:15-22 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.¹⁶ For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life – is not from the Father but is from the world.¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.²⁰ But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.²¹ I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.²² Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

2 John 1:5-9 And now I ask you, dear lady – not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning – that we love one another.⁶ And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.⁷ For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.⁸ Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.⁹ Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.